

The Good Samaritan

Cameron Clark celebrates addiction recovery and a new life

Cameron Clark shouldn't be here. His story is one of second chances.

"I have no doubt that I would be dead, I really do, without St. Vincent," said Clark, 55 years old. "St. Vincent literally saved my life ... I was trying on my own, which is not easy for an addict to get clean."

In 2006, Clark's life came crashing down. While he was working at Publishers Printing, his feet started to hurt. A friend offered him some Lortabs, which is a light opioid used to relieve pain.

"Like most people for pain, I was not prescribed them, but when I took the pain pills, they took the pain away. For an opiate addict, it makes us feel great. It's not real, but it's false sense of energy and happiness," Clark added. "It didn't take long from there. I was off to the races. I didn't see what I was doing."

He progressed to hydrocodone, Percocet, and heroine as his drugs of choice. It didn't take long for opiates to touch every part of his life. He lost his job. He lost his wife. He lost his home. Prior to that, he "had it all." Several years into his struggle with drugs, he became homeless.

"The worst thing about being an addict is that we don't see it until we hit rock bottom," he said. "The first time I checked into a local shelter, it was a very lonely feeling ... it started setting in what was going on. It wasn't a good feeling at all. It felt like I was completely alone. It's a scary feeling."

A Louisville native, Clark said that nobody wanted to be around him. His twelve-year battle with addiction took a toll on family and friends physically, emotionally, and financially. During his stay at local shelters, he was surrounded by stress 24/7.

"There were fights breaking out, people getting stabbed, police would be there



Cameron Clark experienced homelessness due to drug addiction before becoming sober. He is also a former SVDP Thrift Stores Driver for the Warehouse.

two to three times a day," Clark said. "When I became homeless, you had to learn certain things, like where to go when it got cold, where to go eat, and where to do my laundry. I still worry about clean clothes."

The Road to Recovery

In 2018, Clark was told about St. Vincent de Paul's Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter.

"Everyone tries to get into St. Vincent because it's by far the best shelter in Louisville," Clark added. "It's cleaner. Staff help with housing. It's just overall nicer. We each have a small chore ... there was no structure in the other shelters."

After checking into SVDP, it wasn't a clean path forward. Clark was hired onto

SVDP's maintenance team, but it was to supply his habit.

"The earth shattered," he said. "It was a Friday. It was payday ... I ran into a former heroine dealer. It had been two to three weeks since I did anything. I got back to Ozanam Inn, did heroine, and that's all I remember."

After a fourteen-day detox at a local treatment facility, it would be the last time Clark did drugs. SVDP gave him a second chance.

"There are a lot of great people on that campus—staff and clients," Clark said. "I began waking up with tears of joy. I started taking a lot of pride in everything. Somewhere along the line I lost faith in everything, especially in myself."

(continued on page 2)



ST. VINCENT
de PAUL

LOUISVILLE

The Good Samaritan

The monthly newsletter of
St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

Send correspondence to PO Box 17126,
Louisville, KY 40217-0126

Visit us at 1015-C South Preston Street,
Louisville, KY 40203-2733

Dave Calzi
CEO/Executive Director

Pam Evans
Director of Development
pevans@svdplou.org

Donna Young Cicchiello
Director of Conference Affairs
& Volunteer Services

Tony Nochim
Communications & Public Relations
Coordinator

Send comments and change
of address notifications to
tnochim@svdplou.org

Our Mission

We house, feed, and support those in
need with compassion and dignity.

Support SVDP

To find out more about our work or
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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

From the Shelter to the Store

It was the break that Clark needed. He remembers his sobriety date like the back of his hand, as if it's a holiday or birthday—June 25, 2018. He's made amends with his ex-wife and has spent valuable time with his teenage daughter.

"I wanted to believe in God, but I couldn't until certain things started sliding into place," Clark said. "I haven't even thought about drugs because things were just going too well."

For the next several years, Clark worked on the maintenance team and was also the Thrift Stores Driver for the Warehouse. He enjoyed his interactions with customers in the store or while picking up donations.

Clark felt right at home on SVDP's Shelby Park campus.



"There's something special about that block [SVPD campus] to me. It's a very spiritual place for me. To tell you the truth, I think God smiles on that block," Clark said.

Third Thrift Store opening off Preston Highway

We are opening our third Thrift Store at 8633 Preston Highway in the Bittersweet Shopping Center. The grand opening will be Tuesday, Feb. 27. With this third location, we expect to increase our reach in the Louisville community.

"At St. Vincent de Paul Louisville, our Thrift Stores are an important part of who we are, enabling us to carry out our mission to house, feed, and support those in need with compassion and dignity. We are excited to announce the opening of our new store and provide a valuable resource to a part of our community that we have not historically served," said Dave Calzi, CEO & Executive Director.

One hundred percent of the net profits from our stores help fund our programs and services for those in need. We believe this strategic decision will allow us to advance our mission and meet the household needs of those in this area.

"I am honored and excited to be opening a store in the very community

that I live in," said Jessica Brotzge, Store Manager. "I have heard good feedback from my neighbors, and I really think the store can thrive in this area."

We rely on the generous support of our donors for all the merchandise we sell. Individuals, businesses, organizations, and churches play a significant role in providing the goods for our Thrift Stores. Gently used clothing, household items, and furniture are always needed. We are taking donations at this location starting Tuesday, March 5.

You may also visit our other two stores: 2217 Hikes Ln. at Bardstown Rd. or 10280 Shelbyville Rd. at Dorsey Lane. Follow us on our Thrift Stores Facebook page, "St. Vincent de Paul Louisville Thrift Stores," to see what we're currently selling at each location. We post regularly. For more information on store and donation hours, visit <https://www.svdplou.org/thrift-stores/>.

HOW TO HELP SUPPORT OUR STORES



We rely on the generous support of our donors for all we sell



Please bring us your gently-used clothing, household items, and furniture

USED ITEMS



100% of the net profits help fund our programs and services for those in need

SUPPORT

This advances our mission to house, feed, and support those in need with compassion and dignity





There's not a better opportunity coming up to celebrate the women in your life this year!

We are excited to host our sixth annual Roses & Rosé event on Sunday, April 28, from 1 to 3 p.m. at The Olmsted. Join us for a memorable afternoon celebrating the women in our lives and enjoying rosé wine and mimosas, silent auction, Vendor Village, wine pull, speakers, and more.

Michelle Spurlock attended Roses & Rosé for the first time last year.

"I really loved my experience last year," Spurlock said. "I have worked in the mental health industry for 38 years. For years, I was on the board of Bridgehaven Mental Health Services. I had no idea ... how much you did. At last year's Roses & Rosé, the speaker was quite moving as



she shared her experience with not only housing, but the therapy she was able to get. I was truly moved to tears."

Proceeds will directly benefit transitional housing for those fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking. In our last fiscal year, we served 98 households in our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Program with nearly three out of four exiting to permanent housing. Tickets are available now at <https://one.bidpal.net/rosesandrose2024/welcome>.

If you can't attend in person, but would still like to help, consider purchasing a nice meal for someone we serve using the same link. For any questions, reach out to Makenzie Greenwell, Senior Development & Events Coordinator, at (502) 272-2134 or mgreenwell@svdplou.org.

Save the Date

UPCOMING EVENTS AT
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE



Come Join Us!

Roses & Rosé

Sunday, April 28

Clubs & Cocktails

Dinner: Sunday, September 22

Scramble: Tuesday, September 24

For event information, please contact
Makenzie Greenwell at (502) 272-2134 or
mgreenwell@svdplou.org.

Our thanks to
Louisville Metro
Government for
their support



**Purchase
Tickets
or a
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AN INTERACTIVE DIGITAL IMPACT REPORT (Fiscal Year 2022-23)



Phone

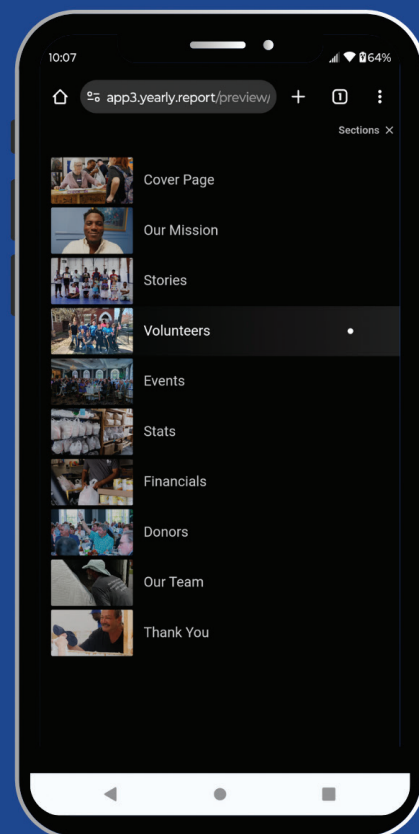
Use your phone to scan the QR code to the right.



Computer/Laptop

Use the link below to view on your computer/laptop.

<https://st-vincent-de-paul-louisville.yearly.report/impact-report-2022-2023>



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER UPDATE



Beginning in 2024, we will only provide an annual summary of donations (by January 31st of each year) in lieu of monthly donor acknowledgement letters. Online donors will continue to receive an email acknowledgement, as well as a yearly annual summary. The annual summary will allow donors to comply with IRS regulations for donations of \$250 and above. In addition, please consider joining our online mailing list by ensuring we have your most up-to-date email address. Please reach out to Makenzie Greenwell at (502) 272-2134 or mgreenwell@svdplou.org with questions or concerns.

SVDP CONFERENCES

Community Impact (Fiscal Year 2022-23)



4,752
calls answered



16,000 in-person
home visits



Drove more than
41,000 miles



45,000
HOURS

Volunteer/service time



\$1.4 million
► **28,000**
people helped

► Provided food, clothing,
and financial assistance



www.svdplou.org/find-a-conference/

RAINY DAY FUND UPDATE

\$9,330
of **\$150,000** goal

To learn more, visit
www.svdplou.org/rainy-day-fund/.

